



Big employers can request payment options

If you're an employer with 50 employees or more, you can request a special way to pay your employees' certification fees through Texas Online. The Third Party Pay option allows employees to enter a code on the payment page instead of entering the employee's personal payment information. Here's the way it works. Once the employer has been issued a Third Party Pay ID number, applicants click on the Third Party Pay option when they reach the payment page of the electronic application at Texas Online. They will be asked to enter the provider's Third Party Pay ID number. Applicants can also enter an optional email address on this page. This email will be used by Texas Online when notification is sent that the payment has been received.

If approved, DSHS will send an approval letter to the employer along with a user ID and temporary password. For more information, see www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/thirdpartypayoption.shtm, or contact Mattie Mendoza at Mattie.Mendoza@dshs.state.tx.us; (512) 834-6735.

State health budgets shrinking

No surprise here: A survey of health agencies has found state health budgets continue to shrink, worsened by the economic downturn. The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) contends the diminishing funds are forcing cuts in critical public health programs and reductions in workforce that will have wide-ranging effects. In Texas, the Legislature is determining 2010-2011



state agency budgets during its current session. Health and Human Services System, which is comprised of five agencies (DSHS, DARS, HHSC, DADS and DFPS) has asked for a budget of \$65.5 billion, an increase of about 12 percent. The DSHS portion of the budget is about \$5.5 billion. The request includes baseline funding and exceptional items, which is additional money the agencies say they need to conduct business. One of the exceptional items DSHS is hoping for is additional funds to hire more personnel to staff the regulatory division. One interesting note: More than 70 percent of the HHS System budget — about \$46 billion — goes toward Medicaid-related expenses.

Children may need 'boost' for seatbelts

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children who are restrained by adult seatbelts are four times more likely to be injured in a wreck than children in child passenger seats or booster seats.



Child passenger seats are common now, but what if a child has outgrown it? Children ages 4 to 8 years old are often too large for child restraint seats and too small for a regular seatbelt. That's where booster seats come in. They provide added height so that an adult seatbelt is positioned properly across a child's smaller body. Need more facts? Go to www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/childpas.htm.

Patches

New to EMS and want your own EMS patch? DSHS does not make or sell patches, but we have a list of vendors who do on our website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/formsresources.shtm#EMS.



FEMA launches disaster assistant website

FEMA introduced a new user-friendly website called Disasterassistance.gov in December. The website was created as part of the Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan (DAIP) developed after Hurricane Katrina. The website centralizes the application process for federal disaster assistance and offers a clearinghouse for information on programs administered at the federal, state and local levels. For more information, go to www.disasterassistance.gov.

2008 firefighter fatality stats released

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) reported 114 on-duty firefighter fatalities in the United States as a result of incidents that occurred in 2008. While the full report won't be available until July, USFA has drawn some conclusions about 2008:

- Preliminary estimates indicate that heart attacks and strokes were responsible for the deaths of 50 firefighters (43.8 percent).
- 26 on-duty firefighters died in association with wildland fires.
- 64.9 percent of all firefighter fatalities occurred while performing emergency duties.
- Twenty-nine firefighters died in 2008 as the result of vehicle crashes. Six firefighters were killed in crashes involving their personal vehicles and three died in water tanker crashes. These two vehicle types have historically been most often involved in crashes that take the lives of firefighters. Speed and a lack of seat belt use historically contribute to these incidents.

These fatality statistics for 2008 are provisional and subject to change as the USFA contacts state fire marshals to verify those reported to have died on-duty during 2008. To read the preliminary report, go to www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/08-fatality-summary.pdf.

Population data available



If you've ever needed to know information on the make-up of your county's population, now it's as easy as going on the web. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) SNAPS website provides local-level community profile information nationwide. It can be browsed by county or state, or searched by zip code. The information can serve as a valuable tool when planning for emergencies or even applying for grants. It also provides a "snapshot" of things to consider in tailoring health education and communication efforts that are accessible, understandable and timely. Go to www.bt.cdc.gov/snaps to check it out.

Applications due March 17

The application for FY 2009 Designated Trauma Facilities and Emergency Medical Services (DTF/EMS) Account – Hospital Allocation was sent to all eligible hospitals and it is posted on the website: www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/FY09DTF_EMSSApp.shtm. If you want to be considered for funding, the application must be postmarked by March 17, 2009.



On Duty

Bleeding control and shock management revised



The NREMT recently revised all Bleeding Control and Shock

Management skill evaluation instruments to reflect the recommendations by the American College of Surgeons. This change was previously announced in July 2008 and is supported by research published in Prehospital Trauma Life Support: "If external bleeding from an extremity cannot be controlled by pressure, application of a tourniquet is the reasonable next step in hemorrhage control." (Salomone, J. and Pons, P. (2007). Mosby-Elsevier. (St. Louis, MO) pp. 180 – 181). Additional bleeding control and shock management questions based on the revised recommendations continue to be pilot-tested and placed in the item banks.

Current skill evaluation instruments, including the updated Bleeding Control sheet are available online (EMS Professionals, Exam Coordinator Documents) at www.nremt.org. If you have further questions regarding practical examination standards, please contact Rob Wagoner, Associate Director (robw@nremt.org) or Gabe Romero, Examination Coordinator (gromero@nremt.org)

Emergency funding can help EMS and hospitals

Have you had an emergency that caused a degradation of services to the communities you serve? Extraordinary Emergency Funding is available to assist licensed EMS providers, hospitals and registered first responder organizations that suffer events that may severely reduce or incapacitate emergency response capability.



For more information, contact Roxanne Cuellar at (512) 834-6700 ext. 2377 or roxanne.cuellar@dshs.state.tx.us.

Here's who received money recently:

Crystal City EMS

\$28,568 for operational expenses

Galveston EMS

\$230,769 for two ambulance units and one first responder vehicle

Bonham Fire Department

\$96,945 to purchase an ambulance and a cot

Grants available for ECA training



Are you in a rural area that needs more EMS personnel? DSHS has a total of \$50,000 in this fiscal year available for EMS training programs, registered first responder organizations (FROs), coordinators and/or instructors to conduct ECA courses in rural or underserved areas of the state that lack local EMS training resources. Grant funds cover the cost of instruction and textbooks, as well as other expenses such as printing and supplies. OEMS/TS will accept grant applications on a first-come-first-served basis until the funds run out for the fiscal year. Eligibility requirements for ECAT grants: (1) a minimum of three students, (2) students must agree to perform emergency care attendant services for at least one year with a local emergency medical service provider or first responder organization, and (3) services must be provided in a designated rural or underserved area of Texas, as determined by zip code or county. For more information, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/TrainingFunding.shtm or contact Roxanne Cuellar at (512) 834-6700 ext. 2377 or roxanne.cuellar@dshs.state.tx.us.

Recently awarded grants:

Moss Lake VFD

City of Lorenzo

Criminal background checks take time

Reciprocity applications are way up, and that means people may be finding out the hard way that background checks can take six weeks or longer to complete. The length of time that it may take to review a criminal history depends on any of the following:

- The applicant's submission of the proper documentation.
- The backlog of finger print checks at DPS and/or the FBI. **NOTE: Once the applicant's finger print card is submitted to one of these agencies, the EMS investigator has no control over how much time those agencies require to run the applicant's fingerprints.**
- Other agencies/entities that may have to submit documentation, i.e. courts, employers, probation offices and the military.

For more information about the criminal history background check process, see www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/qicriminal.shtm.



Ready.gov preps communities for any emergency

Simply put, if members of your community are prepared for emergencies, it makes the job of emergency responders that much easier when disaster strikes. That's where Ready.gov comes in – it shows people how to be prepared. By starting with something as simple as putting together emergency supply kits for the home and car, Americans can be prepared. Each of these kits should include basic necessities such as water, food and first aid supplies to help you survive if you are without power or become stranded in your vehicle. For more information about steps your community can take and free materials, go to www.ready.gov or call (800) BE-READY.



Q: I am a registered nurse, and I just passed the NR EMT exam. Can I now challenge the NR paramedic exam?

A: Candidates can pursue Texas EMS certification based on training in another health care profession via an equivalency evaluation by a college-based EMS training program. The process is posted on our website at www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/sequiv.shtm. To find a list of EMS training programs, go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/formsresources.shtm#OpenRecords and scroll down to "EMS Education Programs." In most cases, the college-based programs are apparent by their names.



Inauguration busy for EMS, too

You're in a big city – the nation's capital – and you're expecting millions of visitors to converge on one area of the city. For hours. In frigid temperatures that don't budge above 20 degrees. For Washington, D.C., fire and EMS personnel, it meant a busy morning. On January 20, approximately 1.8 million people descended on the city, and fire and EMS personnel in D.C. and the surrounding areas responded to about 2,100 calls. The majority of calls were from people who fell or were complaining of cold. Twenty of those were hospitalized. An EMS spokesperson said one of the biggest problems was simply reaching patients quickly through the throngs that gathered on Washington's National Mall for the inauguration.

On Duty



CDC releases triage guidelines

Each year, 41 million people are injured and require treatment in emergency departments. Previous research has shown that decisions made at the scene of the injury are vital, as getting care at a Level I trauma center can increase the chance of survival by 25 percent for patients who are severely injured.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released new field triage guidelines for EMS personnel. The new Guidelines for Field Triage of Injured Patients are in line with the 2006 Institute of Medicine report on the state of emergency care in the United States, which envisioned a highly coordinated emergency services system that assures that each patient receives the most appropriate care at the optimal location. The CDC hopes the guidelines will help the nation's 800,000 EMS professionals in making crucial field triage transport decisions after injury incidents. It will also help administrators, medical directors, trauma system leaders, providers and public health professionals improve patient outcomes. This release is the only the beginning of a process that includes dissemination, implementation, evaluation and revision – and the CDC wants EMS's help. Materials are available to help EMS professionals implement the Field Triage Decision Scheme:

- A comprehensive User's Guide
- A PowerPoint overview of the Decision Scheme
- A poster that explains the Decision Scheme step-by-step
- A pocket card that explains the Decision Scheme step-by-step
- A copy of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, which includes continuing education opportunities
- A podcast that provides an overview of the Decision Scheme and its impact on EMS practices

All of these materials are available at the following website: www.cdc.gov/FieldTriage.

For a complete copy of the MMWR report, visit www.cdc.gov/mmwr/mmwr_rr.html.

2009 award nominations due October 6

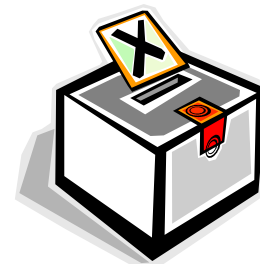
Sure, we know it seems like a long way off – but now is the time to start looking around for people or organizations who might deserve a Texas EMS and trauma award. If you've been nominated or done the nominating, you know just how exciting it is when the awards are announced at Texas EMS Conference.

Each category honors a person or organization that exemplifies the best that EMS/trauma system has to offer. It's quite an honor to be nominated and to win. The categories and the explanations are listed on page 13 and on the nomination form. Once you've chosen the correct category, the rest is pretty easy.

How can I nominate a person or a service for an award?

Go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/09AwardsIntroduction.shtm. Save the nomination form to your computer and fill it out by clicking in the gray areas beside each question. **When you finish, save the file and email it back to EMSAwards@dshs.state.tx.us.**

Include written examples of why this person or organization should win. Please be specific, using examples when possible. Keep in mind that the people who review the



nominations most likely won't be as familiar with your nominee as you are.

Send the file to us by email no later than October 6, 2009. The packets are then given to programs in the Office of EMS and Trauma Systems Coordination and sent to each EMS zone office. Each program and zone ranks the nominations for each category and returns the information to the Office, where scores are tallied. Scores are kept confidential from all except those who tally the scores. Winners are announced at the Awards Luncheon at Texas EMS Conference in November.

Award Categories 2009

EMS Educator Award honors a state-certified EMS instructor or course coordinator who offers advanced EMS education in Texas.

EMS Medical Director Award honors a physician who has served as a medical director, on-line or off-line, for an EMS organization.

EMS Administrator Award honors an administrator, researcher or manager at the local, city, county, regional or state level who has made a positive contribution to EMS.

Public Information/Injury Prevention Award honors an EMS group or individual for outstanding achievement in public education or injury prevention.

Citizen Award honors a private citizen for a heroic lifesaving act or unique advocacy of EMS.

Private/Public Provider Award honors a ground or air organization that demonstrated a leadership role in EMS by achievement in areas of patient care, public access, medical control, disaster preparedness, public education and training.

Volunteer Provider Award honors an organization staffed by volunteers that assumed a leadership role in EMS by achievement in areas of patient care, public access, medical control, disaster preparedness, public education and training.

First Responder Award honors a first responder organization that assumed a leadership role in EMS by achievement in areas of patient care, public access, medical control, disaster preparedness, public education and training.

Air Medical Service Award honors a public or private air medical service in Texas, a leader in the field, that has demonstrated the highest standards in providing patient care to the citizens of Texas.

Outstanding EMS Person of the Year honors an EMS-certified person who has demonstrated uncommon leadership and courage in providing emergency medical service to the citizens of Texas.

Telecommunicator of the Year honors a person or team who handles a call or system event with a professionalism and efficiency that allowed the first responders on the scene to give the patients the best patient care possible. An individual or a team is eligible for the award.

Trauma Center Award honors a designated trauma facility in Texas that has demonstrated leadership and high standards in implementing injury prevention programs and providing trauma patient care to the citizens and visitors of Texas.

Regional Advisory Council Award honors a regional advisory council in Texas that has demonstrated leadership and high standards in improving emergency medical service to the citizens of Texas.

Still smoking? Read this

If you're a smoker, you already know the drill: it's better the sooner you quit. Every time smokers light up, they expose themselves to more than 50 known causes of cancer burning in the cigarettes. Now the American Cancer Society says that if you quit before the age of 50, you can cut the risk of dying in the next 15 years in half. Now, that's an incentive. Once you reach 50, 15 years doesn't seem that far away!



On Duty